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Yes, the Soviets are doing those things

We seem in recent months to have seen a curious new theory evolve in our politics — that of "innocence by association."

The essence of this theory is that nobody should pay attention to massive communist efforts to manipulate opinion and public policy in this country, as long as non-communists are involved as well. Even when the goals of such manipulation are in the communists' strategic interest, non-communist involvement should exempt the enterprise from scrutiny and blame.

Such is the rock-bottom view of reactions to the recent report of the House Intelligence Committee on "active measures" taken by the Soviet Union against the West. This document is jam-packed with data showing the communists are hard at work to infiltrate, manipulate and guide the so-called "peace movement" in this country and abroad. Chapter and verse from CIA and FBI authorities are cited in profusion.

In many respects, the House report confirms findings set forth in this column from time to time this year on Moscow's campaign to subvert our nuclear defenses. Among the particulars provided by these official sources are the following:

- The Soviet Union spends up to \$4 billion a year on propaganda and disinformation activities — including efforts to manipulate Western opinion, influence media contacts, palm off forged documents, spread mistrust of the United States, and otherwise advance its policy and propaganda goals.

- A "primary focus" of such Soviet efforts this year has been "arms control and disarmament and the American peace movement," with special emphasis on blocking development of new strategic weapons by the United States and NATO. Other major projects have been efforts to discredit U.S. policy in El Salvador, destabilize non-communist regimes in Africa, and stir up fear of U.S. intelligence operations.

- In these pursuits, the Soviets place major stress on enlisting non-communists on their side through a variety of front groups. Preeminent among these are the World Peace Council, a nominally independent, and non-communist agency totally subservient to Moscow, and its American offshoot, the U.S. Peace Council. "Key leadership positions in the U.S. Peace Council," we are informed by this report, "were given to CPUSA (Communist Party USA) members."

- A prime example of such involvement by the WPC and U.S. Peace Council was this June's special U.N. session on disarmament and its accompanying mass demonstration. "The World Peace Council," says the FBI, "at Soviet direction, was deeply engaged, almost to the exclusion of other projects," in preparation for the special U.N. session. "The U.S. Peace Council was directly involved in the planning of the June 12 demonstration," coordinated with that special session.

- Other identified front groups helping out in such activities include the World Federation of Trade Unions and the women's International Democratic Federation. Among the U.S. groups cooperating with the latter are members of Women for Racial and Economic Equality and Women Strike for Peace. Soviet diplomats and agents of the KGB — secret police — also take a direct hand in these manipulations.

- "KGB officers," the report tells us, "have recently instructed their contacts to devote serious attention to the anti-war movement in the United States, especially with respect to coalitions forming among the various factions... A Soviet diplomat involved in active measures operations assigned to the Soviet Embassy in Washington has been actively attempting to influence the American peace movement. He has attended numerous conferences and has made a substantial number of speeches to various peace and disarmament groups throughout the United States."

You might think that official revelations of this sort — so different from what we have been getting in most of the major media — would arouse some attention and concern. The standard response, however, is quite the opposite. Since non-communists are also involved in these activities, it is contended, there is no need to worry about the Soviet plot against our defenses. Ergo, innocence by association.

That line of reasoning, of course, is patently absurd. The point of all such Soviet stratagems is, precisely, to rope in the bamboozled non-communists. Which is all the more reason the communist role in this activity should be exposed for all to see and be forewarned about.

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